

Washington Report

by Congressman James Broyhill

Social Security is a much discussed topic these days on the streets and in the shops throughout the 10th District and on the floor of the United States Congress. Never has one subject generated so much mail and so many phone calls as my office has received in recent weeks.

The reason for widespread interest and concern is obvious--social security affects nearly every family in the United States. For many, the monthly social security check is the only income. I am beginning a series of reports to the people on the social security system--its history, its problems, and possible solutions.

The Social Security System was originally framed in 1935 and it was quite limited in scope at that time, providing the promise of benefits upon retirement to workers who had contributed to the system for a set number of years. This retirement system was originally designed to supplement other sources of retirement income. That fact has long since been changed because literally millions of people rely on the monthly check as their only source of income.

Four years after the first act was passed, survivor--spouse benefits were provided to the families of workers. In 1956 and 1965, disability and health care protection were enacted into law. Not only have the benefits available to the number of citizens who participate in it. In 1940, for example, the program covered roughly 55 percent of all workers. Today, the percentage has grown to 90 percent with 36 million Americans receiving social security benefits of some kind and 130 million workers contributing to the system through payroll taxes.

Let's look at a few more statistics so we can see the gravity of the problem. When Social Security became law 46 years ago, the maximum tax imposed on business and industrial workers was just \$30. Today, it is nearly \$2,000.

In 1950, the program served two and one-half million people at an annual cost of \$522 million. Today it provides assistance for 36 million people at an annual cost of \$174 billion.

To finance social security when it began, there were 11 adults in the labor force for every one person 65 years or older. Today there are only three workers for every one retired. In 40 years, the ratio will be two to one. When social security was enacted, the life expectancy of the average American was 61 years. Today it is 73.2 years. And today those who do reach the age of 65 can expect to live an additional 14 years for males and 18 years for females.

There are three social security trust funds, maintained separately although all are financed out of the payroll tax. The three are the retirement and survivor's insurance, disability insurance, and health insurance.

It is the social security retirement and survivor's trust fund which will go broke by the middle of next year. Even if the assets of the disability fund were added in, the two funds together would be out of money by the end of next year. With the funds from the health part, the program could exist for two additional years under the most optimistic assumptions.

Four years ago when President Carter received the approval from Congress for massive social security tax increases, he said the additional revenues would put the system on a sound financial basis until past the turn of the century. That has not proven to be the case.

We must also consider that public confidence in the system is at an all-time low, according to two national surveys. One indicated that more than four out of five workers have less than full confidence they will receive benefits when they retire and two out of five have hardly any confidence at all.

While I do not support all of the recommendations which have been made thus far, I am committed to making sure that we honor the commitment which has been made to those who depend on Social Security now and those who are counting on it for the future. I will continue my discussion on Social Security in my next Washington Report.



CAMPING ALL YEAR ROUND

BY BOB NESOFF

What Are Your RV Vacation Preferences?
Over the past number of weeks I've gone into detail on potential locations for outdoor-oriented vacations over the coming summer months. This by no means even begins to cover what is available for the RVer and tent camper in the United States. Nor does it mean that those locations not covered aren't as good. I simply have tried to tell about some of the places I've personally seen and recommend. Now it's your turn.

I'd like you to share with your fellow readers your favorite camp spots and experiences. Is there a location that is especially good for campers? Also, are there places or situations that should be avoided for any reason and why?

There are no geographic restrictions on locations you may want to discuss. We've covered in this column camping from Canada to Mexico, the Virgin Islands and Guatemala, Europe and South Africa. So let's hear what you have to say.

This information is especially important in an era when costs are escalating so rapidly. Fortunately the rise of fuel prices has slowed somewhat in the face of an oil glut. But international politics and the problems with the Mideast and

Libya could provoke a return to oil diplomacy and shoot prices skyward again.

By planning ahead you can cut these costs considerably and still have the vacation you've been planning all year.

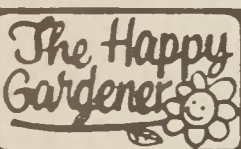
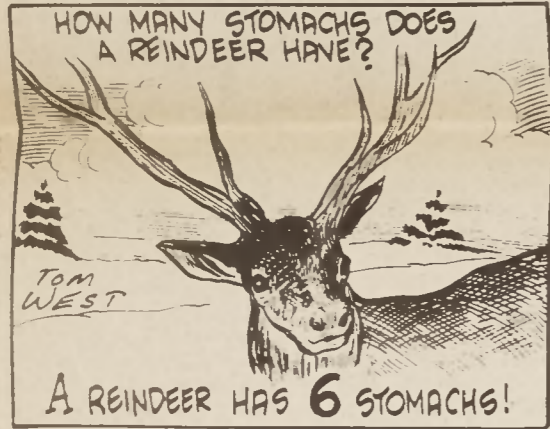
There was a time when we would get in the car, hook up with the rig, and then decide if we were going to drive north or south, east or west.

Some of the best vacations ever were those that followed no plan at all, staying an extra day or two wherever and cutting out other locations.

With fuel in the \$1.50 a gallon area you really can't do that anymore. So the best thing to do is look at the available possibilities and make advance reservations.

That's where the request at the beginning of this column comes in. I'd like to cover as many recommendations as possible, going on the premise that all of you readers can act as advance scouts for the others.

So let me hear from you. Drop me a letter care of this publication and don't forget to include your name and address. If I use your letter I'll send you either a free weekend camping pass at a KOA of your choice or a free Rand McNally camping directory. Let me know which you prefer.



Workplace Safety Is Everyone's Responsibility

By Vincent L. Tofany, President, National Safety Council

WATERING TIPS FOR DROUGHT GARDENS

Here are some ideas for watering your garden without wasting water:

Watering during the coolest phases of the day will prevent evaporation and help plants use all the water you give them. Late afternoon when the sun is on the wane is a good time to water; even better are early morning hours when plants can drink up and have a whole sunlit day to use their water supply. Water deeply and take advantage of days when humidity is high to make moisture last. When it really does rain, some of the water can be preserved in shallow catch basins around the base stems of the bigger vegetables -- eggplants, tomatoes, peppers. Also to catch rainwater, put containers below drainspouts -- or to catch perfectly good, usable water, under air conditioners and dehumidifiers.

Other types of "used" water can be applied to dry gardens as well. In the kitchen, put a bucket under the faucet when you rinse vegetables. Also, use buckets when you take quick, soapsless showers. The problem with using waste water from laundering or dishwashing is that it is difficult to determine the balance of soaps and detergents. Chlorine and sodium in these products can damage growing greenery.

There is no question about who is responsible for safety and health of Americans in the places where they work.

Every company chief executive officer is responsible.

Every line supervisor is responsible.

Every employee shares the responsibility.

It makes no difference how small or large the company is, each person who works in a business or industrial organization has the right to expect that his or her safety and health will be protected by the company.

And each person, in turn, has the responsibility for following company safety and health guidelines and policies to protect himself or herself from possible injury or occupational illness.

This shared responsibility ties in with a dramatic shift in business safety and health under way today. The shift was caused by the change in the thrust of the present federal government away from enforced regulations toward the requirement that the private sector develop certain performance levels.

In short, the federal government, industry and business and labor have now become allies in the effort to determine and implement safety and health program elements that actually work to reduce accidents in the workplace.

What does this mean to the chief executive officers of American businesses? It means an increased opportunity for them to join in the voluntary safety movement to meet the accelerated needs of safety and health in their plants and offices. They no longer can look to the federal government to assume full responsibility. The burden for safety and health of their employees is now their rightful responsibility.

Safety Council. The Council is the nonpartisan broker who can bring industry, business, labor and government representatives together in a private sector effort to replace the federal government's role in workplace safety.

Nowhere else can a business leader find the creative, effective programs to give his employees the safety and health protection they deserve. The Council is a nongovernmental, not-for-profit public service organization that has been working every day since 1913 for greater health and safety in the nation's workplaces.

It develops and makes available each year fully updated safety and health programs and materials which work to



Vincent L. Tofany

prevent accidents. Accident prevention is no small matter to American businesses. In 1980, for example, employees killed in both at-work and off-the-job accidents totaled 56,100. Workers injured in both kinds of accidents numbered about 5,500,000. The total cost of fatalities and injuries and occupational illnesses, including loss from business fires resulting from work accidents, amounted to about \$30 billion.

If the private sector fails to assume new and greater responsibility for the safety and health of American workers, and if the accident/fatality/injury rate in occupational safety and health deteriorates, there is reason to believe that in the future regulators will

come on strongly again. This, perhaps, will be brought about by heavy public demand, as it was the last time.

It pays a business to develop a competent and consistent safety and health program for its employees. Accidents interrupt productivity, there is a lessening of high morale and an increase in turnover and training expenses in a business or industry where the accident rate is high. In addition, there are direct payments for insurance, workers' compensation and the costs of repairing damage to equipment and property.

These economic facts about the cost of accidents will not change, regardless of what new postures the federal administration adopts regarding safety and health regulations. Should there be an easing of regulations, which is expected, the needs for effective safety and health programs for business and industry will not diminish.

The burden of responsibility is shifting to the private sector. It will be up to the voluntary safety movement to prove by performance that it can make the progress in safety and health that it said it could accomplish if only the government would "get off its back."

We at the National Safety Council invite all businesses and industries to join with us in our leadership of the voluntary safety movement. Those that have joined the Council over the years have found that they profit from safety. Money spent on safety and health programs is money returned in greater productivity, less downtime, higher morale and other beneficial factors which contribute to a better profit picture.

I suggest that any business and industry leader who wants to demonstrate his or her responsibility for the safety and health for the company's employees will receive assistance from the Membership Department of the National Safety Council, 444 North Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60611.

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